



Lauren Dowd Hartford graduate wins Southwestern Michigan College debate competition

When students entered their Speech 102 classes at the beginning of the fall semester at Southwestern Michigan College this year, they were presented with a challenge – perfecting their public speaking skills enough to compete in an Intra-School Debate Competition at the end of the semester.

While students worked on mastering the fundamentals of public speaking throughout the semester, they also worked in teams of two researching assigned debate topics ranging from “Is it ever justifiable to execute a criminal” to “Are beauty pageants harmful?” At the end of the semester, each team presented a 20-minute debate of their assigned topic with one student presenting the affirmative side of the issue and one team presenting the negative side of the issue.

The debates were evaluated by panels of guest judges and by the students’ classmates. At the end of the competition, the judges’ scores were used to determine the top advocate for each class and the students voted on which one of their peers should be awarded the Most Improved Advocate Award.

Lauren Dowd, of Hartford, won the Top Advocate Award for her Speech 102 class after presenting the affirmative side of the debate topic, “Should the private lives of public figures be open to press scrutiny?” Dowd, a 2011 graduate of Hartford High School, is currently attending Southwestern Michigan College to obtain a job that involves helping others. Upon winning the competition, Dowd stated that the competition “was really fun and a great learning experience. I’m honored to be named Top Advocate.”

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Watervliet Ice Festival this weekend; fireworks, Frosty Run, chili cook-off, snow softball, and kids’ “Snoccer” among Saturday and Sunday events

By Annette Christie

If event planners are successful, Watervliet will be bustling the first full weekend of January for the annual Ice Festival. One of the event organizers, City Commissioner Melanie Marvin, says that the plate will be full all weekend with a great variety of things to keep people interested and entertained.

Several new activities have been added to one of Southwest Michigan’s original wintertime festivals besides the traditional ice carvings. New events include an Indoor Beanbag Tournament, Co-ed “Snowball” Softball Tournament, a “Snoccer” Soccer Tournament for kids, and an Indoor Arts and Crafts Show.

Registrations or information for the below listed events can be done by calling City Hall at 269-463-6769 or emailing: exit41fun@gmail.com

unless otherwise specified.

The Co-Ed “Snowball” Softball Tournament will be held at Hays Park and will begin at noon on Saturday. Trophies will be awarded. Teams may be all male, all female, or co-ed. Those with questions could contact jttucker49098@yahoo.com.

The Arts and Crafts Show will be held at 340 N. Main St. from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday.

The Indoor Beanbag Tournament will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, at the K-9 Learning Center, 351 N. Main Street. There is a \$25 per team entry fee and pre-registration is recommended.

Kids from Kindergarten to age 16 can enjoy some soccer in the snow at Hays Park, also on Saturday starting at 11:00 a.m. There is no entry fee but players are asked to be at the fields by 10:00 a.m.

Diehard runners and walkers can participate in the Frosty Fun Run, a 5K event that will start at 7:45 a.m. on Saturday morning at the Watervliet North Elementary School on W. Baldwin. There is a \$10 entry fee and runners and walkers can also register by emailing the event coordinator, Andrea Hutchins at bugsrummy@hotmail.com or calling at 269-208-0307.

Good cooks can put their chili to the test in the annual chili cook-off being held Saturday morning, at the former Fifth Third Bank building on Main St. Entries are asked to have their chili there by 10:30 a.m., and judging will begin at 11:00 a.m. There will be a People’s Choice selection chosen as well as a first place prize given by the judges. There is no entry fee.

The Watervliet Recreation Council, an on-going supporting partner with the City of Watervliet, will be hosting

a warming station in the Fifth Third Bank Building on Main Street throughout the weekend. They will be offering hot cocoa and coffee among other things.

A scavenger hunt will also be held on Saturday morning, and will start at City Hall.

Saturday’s events will be topped off with fireworks in the winter. Expecting to start at approximately 8:00 p.m., the display will be simply spectacular.

The ice carving will continue on Sunday. Marvin said between the two days she expects approximately 38 carvers with ice sculptures throughout the city and into the township. With the temperatures plummeting into the twenties in the early part of the week, hopefully the ice carvings will last into January.

Berrien County Fair announces Grandstand Line-up

Fair officials have announced the exciting lineup of Grandstand acts for the 2012 Berrien County Youth Fair! Country fans will relate to Arkansas native Justin Moore who will headline on Wednesday, August 15, at 7:00 p.m. With hits such as “Small Town USA” and “If Heaven Wasn’t So Far Away” Justin is sure to hit home at the Berrien County Youth Fair. Rock fans will also be entertained by the one and only Bret Michaels. As front man of the band Poison, Bret has been in the spotlight more recently as a reality TV star, winning “Celebrity Apprentice” and starring in his own television series “Rock of Love” on VH1. Bret will be performing on Thursday, August 16, at 7:00 p.m. under the covered grandstand. Also new to the lineup this year is something for the motocross lovers. For the first time ever, the Berrien County Youth Fair will have a supercross race. It’s been requested for years and BCYF has obliged.

A small town Arkansas native, Justin Moore, has been singing gospel and country music since the young age of 2. When he was 18 and fresh out of high school Justin moved to Nashville with a manager already on board. Justin eventually signed a writing deal with Big Picture Music and after a few years received a recording offer with The Valory Music Co. In 2008, Justin was fortunate enough to tour with some of country music’s biggest stars (most of whom are BCYF alum), including Trace Adkins, Brooks & Dunn, and Luke Bryan! In 2009 and 2010, Justin toured alongside Brad Paisley. Justin was nominated for Music Row Magazine’s Breakthrough Artist of 2010. His hometown anthem “Small Town USA” earned a #1 single status in 2009.

Cultural icon Bret Michaels does more jobs in a single day than most people do in an entire lifetime including: rock star, reality star, spokesperson, businessman, and philanthropist. Michaels’ first rose to fame as the front man of Poison in the 1980s. Since then, Poison has achieved massive success selling over 25 million records worldwide! Bret’s solo career has been equally successful; his most recent solo album “Custom Built” topped the charts, reaching #1 on hard rock charts. As a reality TV star, Michael’s “Rock of Love” series on VH1 is one of the most successful in VH1’s history. He went head to head with some of the brightest minds in business on Donald Trump’s NBC hit “Celebrity Apprentice”. He “Trumped” the competition with his Trop-A-Rocka Snapple drink which proved to be so successful, fans rallied to continue its distribution and it is now a permanent offering by Snapple. As a philanthropist Bret Michael’s continues to give. In 2010, Bret partnered with an association close to his heart, the American Diabetes Association. As a lifelong diabetic Bret acts as a spokesperson and sponsor for the disease and continually raises money for diabetes research.

The BCYF is excited to bring supercross to the Fair this year. This race will be a point’s race in the “My Auto Michigan State Fair Supercross Series”. Fans are likely to see a mix of local riders in the amateur series. This event will be general admission and gates will open for warm-up starting at 5:00 p.m.

The rest of the BCYF Grandstand lineup includes the traditional Truck and Tractor Pull to open the Fair on Monday, August 13, and three free Circus Continental shows on kids’

day, which is Tuesday, August 14. Friday, August 17, we’ll see the return of the classic Bullmania.

Tickets for grandstand shows will go on sale after the first of the year, exact date to be announced at a later time. Tickets will be on sale at the Fair office, online at www.bcyf.org or by phone at 1-877-772-5425 (applicable convenience fees may apply). The Fair is once again offering a special deal on one-day gate admission tickets through August 1. The gate admission sale price will be \$5.00 each with the purchase of a grandstand ticket, which is \$1 off of the regular price.

The 67th Berrien County Youth Fair is August 13-18, 2012 with this year’s theme “Where Magic Happens”

2012 BCYF Grandstand Entertainment line-up:

Monday, August 13: *Super Farm Tractor, 2 W/D Truck, 4 W/D Truck, and Modified Tractor Pull.* Show time: 7:00 p.m. Ticket Price: \$10.00 reserved seating

Tuesday, August 14: *Circus Continental* - Show time: 1:00, 4:00, and 7:00 p.m. Ticket Price: FREE
ALSO ON TUESDAY: *High School children and younger are admitted for FREE to the Fair for Kids’ Day.*

Wednesday, August 15: *Justin Moore (Sponsored by: Honor Credit Union)* Show Times: 7:00 p.m. Ticket Price: \$35 for Gold seating, \$25.00 for Silver seating, \$15 for Bronze seating and \$10 for Economy seating

Thursday, August 16: *Bret Michaels* Show Time: 7:00 p.m. Ticket Prices: \$40 for Gold seating, \$30 for Silver seating, \$20 for Bronze seating and \$10 for Economy seating

Friday, August 17: *Bullmania (featuring Bull Riding) Produced by: Super Kicker Rodeo Production.* Show Time: 8:00 p.m. Ticket Prices: \$7.00 reserved seating

Saturday, August 18: *Motocross Produced by: SJO Productions.* Warm Up: 5:00 p.m. Show Time: 7:00 p.m. Ticket Prices: \$12.00 reserved seating

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